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**Centipedes eat animals 15 times their size – 26th January, 2018**

## Level 4

We must be careful of centipedes. The poison from them is highly poisonous and can be deadly. It can paralyze and kill small animals. It can sometimes kill humans. Scientists found a deadly poison in the venom that can stop the hearts of animals 15 times bigger than a centipede. The toxin was in the Chinese red-headed centipede. It works by blocking potassium in cells. This stops an animal's brain from sending signals to the heart to beat, causing a quick death.

The venom rarely kills humans, but it causes pain and swelling for two weeks. An expert in toxins at an institute of zoology said the centipede's venom harms the heart, lungs, and muscular and nervous systems. It has not been found in other poisonous animals. The word "centipede" means 100 legs, but centipedes do not have 100 legs. They have between 30 and 354. They always have an odd number of pairs of legs, so no centipede has exactly 100 legs.

## Level 5

We should be very careful of centipedes. The venom from these creatures packs a serious punch. It can cause paralysis and death in small animals. A centipede's sting is highly poisonous and can kill humans. Scientists have discovered a deadly toxin in the venom that can stop the hearts of animals that are 15 times bigger than a centipede. The toxin in the Chinese red-headed centipede, which can grow to be eight inches long, blocks potassium from moving in and out of cells. This prevents an animal's brain from sending signals to the heart to beat, which leads to a rapid death.

The venom rarely kills humans, but it can be unbelievably painful. It also causes swelling for up to two weeks. Researcher Shilong Yang, an expert in toxins at China's Kunming Institute of Zoology, said: "The centipede's venom has evolved to simultaneously disrupt cardiovascular, respiratory, muscular and nervous systems." This has not been found in other poisonous animals. Despite their name, centipedes do not have 100 legs. They have a number of legs, ranging from 30 to 354. Centipedes always have an odd number of pairs of legs. This means no centipede has exactly 100 legs.

## Level 6

Centipedes are the kind of creatures that are not to be messed with. Their venom packs a serious punch and can cause rapid paralysis and death in insects and small animals. They have even been known to kill people with their highly venomous sting. Scientists have now discovered a deadly toxin in centipede venom that can shut down the hearts of animals that are 15 times bigger than them. The scientists isolated a toxin in the Chinese red-headed centipede. This beast can grow to roughly eight inches in length. The toxin in its venom blocks potassium from moving in and out of cells. This blocking of potassium prevents the brain from sending signals to the heart to beat, thus causing a rapid death.

The venom is rarely fatal for humans, but it can cause agonizing pain and swelling for up to two weeks. The scientists have called it SSM Spooky Toxin. Researcher Shilong Yang, an expert in toxins at China's Kunming Institute of Zoology, explained: "The centipede's venom has evolved to simultaneously disrupt cardiovascular, respiratory, muscular and nervous systems. This molecular strategy has not been found in other venomous animals." Despite their name (centi is "hundred" in Latin and pedis is "foot"), centipedes do not have 100 legs. They have a varying number of legs, ranging from 30 to 354. Centipedes always have an odd number of pairs of legs. This means no centipede has exactly 100 legs.